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Reconceptualizing Strategic Stability as the Foundation for Major Power Relations

Center on Contemporary Conflict

Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School

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The Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering WMD (PASCC) is run at the Center on Contemporary Studies (CCC) and sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). PASCC awards and supports strategic studies and dialogues that anticipate and try to reduce the threat of WMD capabilities.



The CCC has a respected track record for providing research and timely analysis on a variety of topics to leading decision makers in the U.S. national security community. Located in the Naval Postgraduate School, the CCC is the research wing of the Department of National Security Affairs.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information, please contact pascc@nps.edu.

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Reconceptualizing Strategic Stability as the Foundation for Major Power Relations

Performer: U.S. Air Force Academy Institute for National Security Studies

Project Lead: James M. Smith

Project Cost: \$85,000

FY15-16

Objective:

Achieving and maintaining strategic stability was the primary objective of the U.S.-Soviet relationship throughout the Cold War. During the Cold War, strategic stability was understood to be a largely quantitative calculation of balance across strategic systems and weapons. In the 21st century, however, the U.S.'s strategic relationships with Russia and China have changed, and the emphasis has shifted to avoiding tension and building a transparent, predictable, and positive set of relationships. This project will investigate the differing definitions and constructions of the concept of strategic stability among these states and regional nuclear powers. It will develop a policy-relevant understanding of the roots, contemporary manifestations, and policy implications of national characterizations of strategic stability by each of these states.

Approach:

This project will begin with a workshop focused on developing a common template for investigation of each of the global and regional nuclear powers. The study will then proceed in three phases with an application of this analysis in the following order: 1) United States, Russia, and China; 2) Northeast Asia and NATO/Europe; and 3) the Middle East and South Asia. The project will conclude with a final workshop and report.

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